

Even in drought, we're wasting water

There will be no spring miracle in Mudville (aka the San Joaquin Valley) this fourth drought year. Worse, the drought could easily last a few more years. Thus, a few observations are in order:

- Thousands of Valley wells will go dry this summer, pitting rural versus urban residents, and farmer against farmer.
- Gov. Brown has called for a 25% reduction in water usage by cities and towns, but puts no restrictions on agriculture, which uses 80% of the state's stored rainwater.
- Even if we had built Temperance Flat Dam 20 years ago, it would now be nearly empty, like the other 1,400 dams in California. Dams don't make rain.
- The governor and the State Water Resources Control Board could have dealt with drought problems in the late 1970s with serious reforms, including groundwater regulations with teeth, but chose not to do so.
- The state continues to allow wasteful flood irrigation and irrigation of selenium-laced alkali lands.
- It takes 1.1 gallons of water to grow one almond, over 430 gallons per pound. If you were in the middle of a desert drought, would you rather have one almond or a gallon jug of water?

Lloyd Carter

Clovis